

No. 2000-51

## AN ACT

HB 2351

Amending the act of June 23, 1999 (P.L.159, No.22), entitled "An act providing for scholarships for persons entering into the field of science and technology," further providing for definitions, for the New Economy Technology Scholarship Program, for scientific and technological scholarships, for administration and for reporting.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The definition of "approved course of study" in section 3 of the act of June 23, 1999 (P.L.159, No.22), known as the New Economy Technology Scholarship Act, is amended to read:

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

\* \* \*

"Approved course of study." A program or curriculum offered by a postsecondary educational institution that provides instruction in science, technology and related fields and has been approved by the Department of Education in consultation with the Pennsylvania [Human Resources] *Workforce* Investment [Council] *Board*.

\* \* \*

Section 2. Sections 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 of the act are amended to read:  
Section 4. New Economy Technology Scholarship Program.

(a) Establishment of program.—There is hereby established the New Economy Technology Scholarship Program within the agency, to consist of the SciTech Scholarship and the [GI Bill for the New Economy] *Technology Scholarship*.

(b) Issuance of grants.—The agency may provide scholarship grants to an eligible student who is a resident of this Commonwealth upon [confirmation] *certification* from an approved educational institution that the student is enrolled in an approved course of study. Scholarship grants shall only be for the amount set forth in sections 5(a) and 6(a) [and shall only be used for tuition and mandatory fees].

(c) The department, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania [Human Resources] *Workforce* Investment [Council] *Board*, shall establish a list of approved courses of study for the program.

(d) Other funding.—Prior to making a grant under this act, the agency shall first apply Federal Pell Grant and State grants available to [tuition and mandatory fees] *educational costs, as determined by the agency*,

related to an undergraduate program prior to determining the amount of the scholarship grant.

(e) Eligibility.—To receive a scholarship grant under this section, a student [shall] *must* meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Graduation from [a] high school [in this Commonwealth,] or [earned] *earning a* general educational development (GED) diploma or the equivalent thereof.

(2) Maintenance of domicile in Pennsylvania during the term of the scholarship grants.

(3) Compliance with any conditions placed on the scholarship grant by the agency or by the department in consultation with the Pennsylvania [Human Resources] *Workforce Investment [Council] Board*.

(4) Maintenance of a *cumulative* grade point average of 3.0 or higher, on a scale of 4.0, or its equivalent[, beginning with the first semester of the freshman year and through the term of the scholarship or in the last year of high school if the student is applying under section 5 or 6].

(5) [Enter] *Entering* into a written agreement with the agency to:

(i) Satisfy all degree, diploma or certificate requirements and other requirements under this act.

(ii) Commence employment in this Commonwealth within one year after completion of an approved [undergraduate] *bachelor's or associate's* degree or certificate program for a period of one year for each academic year the student received a scholarship grant under this act unless the agency determines that there are extenuating circumstances.

(iii) Reimburse the Commonwealth all amounts received under this act and interest thereon, as determined by the agency, if the student fails to comply with subparagraphs (i) and (ii).

(f) Application.—A student shall apply to the agency for a scholarship grant as prescribed by the agency, to include the provision of all information and documentation required by the agency. The application of a student under 18 years of age shall include the signature of a parent or guardian. The application shall include a verified statement of grade point average from the appropriate educational institution *as required in this act*.

(g) Work requirement.—The work requirement under subsection (e)(5)(ii) shall begin after the receipt of a bachelor's or *an* associate's degree or [other] *another* appropriate certificate from an approved educational institution.

(h) Termination.—If a student terminates enrollment in the approved educational institution during the academic year or prior to completion of the approved course of study, the approved education institution shall notify the agency in writing and shall return all unused portions of the scholarship grant. Returned amounts shall be used to fund other scholarship grants under this act.

(i) **Transfer.**—A scholarship under this act is only transferrable to another *approved* educational institution if approved by the agency.

(j) **Limitation.**—Grants awarded under the program shall be limited to funds appropriated for that purpose. First priority for awarding grants shall be given to renewal applicants. Thereafter, grants shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

(k) **Exception.**—*The agency shall postpone the work requirement under subsection (g) for extenuating circumstances or because of the student's enrollment on a full-time basis in a graduate degree program within one year of the receipt of a bachelor's degree from an approved educational institution. The agency shall require documentation of the person's continual status as a full-time student as defined by the agency. The work requirement under subsection (e)(5)(ii) shall begin within one year after termination of enrollment on a full-time basis in a graduate degree program.*

#### Section 5. SciTech Scholarships.

(a) **Amount of grants.**—The agency shall award a SciTech Scholarship in the amount of \$3,000 per academic year or a lesser amount following application of Federal and State grants under section 4(d) to a student enrolled full time in an approved educational institution pursuing a bachelor's degree *program or its equivalent in an approved course of study*. The student [shall] *must* take at least 12 semester hours *per semester*, or its equivalent, in an approved course of study. *The grant shall be used for educational costs related to the undergraduate program as determined by the agency.*

(b) **Term of grant.**—A grant shall be awarded beginning no earlier than the second academic year of enrollment in an approved educational institution *in a bachelor's degree program or its equivalent in an approved course of study*. The grant shall be for a maximum of three academic years or for up to four academic years if the student is enrolled in an approved course of study that according to the agency requires five academic years to complete. In order to qualify for renewals beyond three years, the student must be in compliance with the requirements of section 4(e) and the agency must determine that the student is making satisfactory progress toward completing a degree.

(c) **Internship or work experience.**—A student who accepts a grant under this section [shall] *must* complete a college-approved or university-approved internship or work experience [in a science, technology or] related [field] *to the student's approved course of study* with an employer located in this Commonwealth prior to receiving a bachelor's degree. The student [shall] *must* comply with any conditions placed upon the internship by the agency or by the department in consultation with the Pennsylvania [Human Resources] *Workforce Investment [Council] Board*. Proof of completion of the internship or work experience requirements must be

submitted to the agency prior to graduation unless otherwise authorized by the agency.

**(d) Grades.**—*At the time of application, an applicant for a SciTech Scholarship must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent. The agency shall annually verify a program participant's maintenance of the required grade point average.*

Section 6. [GI Bill for the New Economy] *Technology Scholarship.*

(a) Amounts of grants.—

**(1)** The agency shall award a [GI Bill for the New Economy scholarship] *Technology Scholarship* in the amount of \$1,000 per academic year or a lesser amount following application of Federal or State grants under section 4(d) to a student enrolled full time in an approved educational institution pursuing an associate's degree *in an approved course of study* or in a private licensed school that has an academic program approved by the agency. *The grant shall be used for educational costs related to the program as determined by the agency.*

**(2)** A student who is enrolled part time [and] *or* is an incumbent worker pursuing an associate's degree *in an approved educational institution* or other specialized program approved by the agency is eligible for a grant of 20% of tuition and mandatory fees.

**(b) Term of grant.**—The grant *awarded under subsection (a)* shall be for a maximum of two academic years or for up to three academic years if the student is enrolled in an approved course of study that according to the agency requires three academic years to complete. In order to qualify for a grant three times, the student must be in compliance with section 4(d), and the institution must determine that the student is making satisfactory progress toward completing an associate's degree or the requirements of the certificate program.

**(c) Exception.**—The agency may waive the one-year employment requirement for an incumbent worker for extenuating circumstances related to the student's employment within the last year.

**(d) Grades.**—*The agency shall annually verify a program participant's maintenance of the required grade point average.*

Section 8. Administration.

**(a) Verification.**—The agency shall monitor and verify a student's fulfillment of all internship and work requirements under this act.

**(b) Enforcement.**—The agency shall enforce repayment of all scholarship grants for a student who does not comply with the provisions of this act, to include use of all lawful collection procedures and the use of private collection agencies.

**(c) Tax.**—Scholarship grants received by a student from the program shall not be considered taxable income for purposes of Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

(d) Financial assistance.—Scholarship grants received by a student from the program shall not be considered financial assistance or appropriations to the approved educational institution.

(e) Customized job training.—No funds under this act shall be granted to a person enrolled in a customized job training partnership program or continuing education course from a postsecondary educational institution for which an employer is providing over 50% of the financial support, directly or indirectly[, **and for which the student is not being charged tuition or fees**].

(f) Appeals.—The provisions of this act shall be subject to 22 Pa. Code Ch. 121 (relating to student financial aid).

(g) Regulations.—The agency shall adopt regulations and procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

#### Section 9. Annual report.

(a) Development of report.—The agency shall publish a report by September 1, 2000, and every year thereafter. The report shall include information regarding the operation of the program, to include:

(1) Total students receiving scholarship grants in both the SciTech Scholarship and the **[GI Bill for the New Economy programs] Technology Scholarship**.

(2) Total number of students who withdraw from the program or internship or work requirements.

(3) The number of full-time and part-time students receiving scholarship grants attending four-year educational institutions, community colleges, independent two-year colleges, private licensed schools and certificate programs reported by institution and category of institution.

(b) Submission.—The annual report shall be submitted to the Governor, the department and the chairmen and minority chairmen of the Appropriations and Education Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Section 3. The appropriations to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency for the SciTech and GI Bill Scholarships and for the administration of those scholarships in section 228 of the act of May 24, 2000 (P.L.1086, No.21A), known as the General Appropriation Act of 2000, shall be used for the SciTech Scholarship and the Technology Scholarship and for the administration of those scholarships as set forth in this act.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000, or immediately, whichever is later.

APPROVED—The 22nd day of June, A.D. 2000.

THOMAS J. RIDGE